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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Favorable Court Ruling for Montana Beef Council and Montana Producers**  
*Favorable court ruling allows Montana Beef Council to get back to its mission*

BILLINGS, MONTANA – On March 27, 2020 the Montana Federal District Court granted the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) summary judgement in the case of the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) vs. Perdue. In the suit, R-CALF USA alleged the use of industry assessments collected by state beef councils for advertising and promotional materials violated the First Amendment rights of beef producers. The Court found that speech by Montana Beef Council (MBC), operating under the Memorandum of Understanding with USDA, is government speech.

The court entered a final judgement which effectively dissolves the preliminary injunction previously in place since June 21, 2017. Therefore, as of March 28, Montana beef producers are no longer required to complete a *Producer Consent to Fund Montana Beef Council* form. Montana Beef Council will remain in agreement under the USDA Memorandum of Understanding. Further, MBC can resume retaining fifty cents of each dollar collected in Montana to be used for beef promotion, research and education under the guidance of the Montana Beef Council Board of Directors, the Beef Act and Order, and USDA oversight. Producers are still permitted to redirect their fifty cents to the Cattlemen’s Beef Board.

“This is a huge win and a huge relief,” said Montana Beef Council President Kiley Martinell. “Our board and staff have seen our operation turned upside down during this, but still managed to carry out valuable beef promotion activities. We look forward to resuming business operations and I am excited about all the meaningful beef promotion and education efforts we can continue on behalf of Montana’s ranchers.”

Montana Beef Council is currently operating remotely due to COVID-19. The next board meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2020 at the Montana Beef Council office in Billings and producers are always welcome to attend. Producers with questions should contact Chaley Harney at (406) 855-2857 or [chaley@montanabeefcouncil.org](mailto:chaley@montanabeefcouncil.org).

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Montana Beef Council was created by cattlemen and for cattlemen in 1954 and is organized to protect and increase demand for beef and beef products through state, national and international consumer marketing programs thereby enhancing profit opportunities for Montana beef producers.